

SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES DURING PRESENTATION OF THE MOTION THAT THE 41ST PLENARY ASSEMBLY DO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr President, I beg to move that this House do adopt the report of the Committee on Human and Social Development and Special Programmes for the 41st Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the Table of the House on..., 2017.

Mr President, in moving this Motion, I wish to inform this august house that the Standing Committee on Human and Social Development and Special Programmes convened on Friday, 7th April, 2017 at Southern Sun O R Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, South Africa in accordance with its mandate under Rule 41(e) of the Rules of Procedure. In attendance at the meeting were twelve of the fourteen member Parliaments of the Forum, with apologies recorded only from the National Parliaments of Lesotho and Mauritius. As chairperson of the Standing Committee, I wish to pay tribute to all Members for taking time to attend the meeting in spite of other pressing commitments. This is a testament to their determination to make a difference in the lives of SADC citizens through the Programme.

Mr President, the Plenary Assembly may wish to note that after a lengthy period of careful planning, the Programme undertook a Mid-Term Review of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, HIV and AIDS Governance (SRHR) Project in May, 2017. The Mid Term Review was a holistic, independent evaluation of the methodology of the Project, including key aspects such as the level of engagement and coordination, among other things. The Mid Term Review generated information that will be used to inform future Project activities or indeed future Projects with particular regard to capacity enhancement for Members of Parliament on SRHR, HIV

and AIDS governance. It also shed light on various aspects of the implementation process which required improvement, in order to attain the Project objectives and ultimately make a difference in the lives of the Project's beneficiaries. The commissioning of the Mid-Term Review is a strong signal to all its stakeholders that the Project is goal-oriented and that we are open to introspect on the performance of the Project for improved delivery of the Project outcomes.

As regards ongoing activities in the period since our last report to this Plenary Assembly, I wish to inform this august house that a need was identified to support the Researchers working on the SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project with laptops. To this end, seven laptops were procured for all the SRHR Project Researchers in the participating Parliaments to facilitate their work on the Project. The laptops have since been distributed to the participating Parliaments, with each Parliament receiving one laptop.

Further, Mr President, this 41st Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the HSDSP has been running two Projects, namely; the SADC HIV Financing Project and the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, HIV and AIDS Governance Project. Under the SADC Financing Project, the Forum was availed a total sum of US \$500,000 to be applied towards capacitating Parliamentarians in the oversight of commitments made at the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government held in July, 2013 by their governments on domestic financing of the HIV and AIDS response. A number of activities have since been undertaken under the two Projects, although there were considerable challenges recorded in some Parliaments. The SADC HIV Financing Project Agreement, came to an end in **December, 2016.**

Mr President, allow me now to briefly highlight some of the key challenges that have been experienced in implementing the SADC HIV Financing Project in some of the member countries.

i) Lesotho

The Standing Committee on Human and Social Development and Special Programmes noted with concern that at the time of its sitting, the Parliament of Lesotho was dissolved pending general elections which were due to be held in that country on 3rd June, 2017. Similarly, the Committee sadly observed that the political instability in that country, which had necessitated that the country go to elections twice in a period of two years in 2015 and 2017, had made it difficult to implement the Project as planned activities repeatedly had to be suspended. Further, because of frequent elections, some Members of Parliament who had been capacitated under the Project were lost. Be that as it may, the Standing Committee noted that the Parliament of Lesotho remained committed to continuing with implementation of the Project activities as soon as the new Parliament settled down after the June, 2017 elections.

ii) Tanzania

Members may wish to note that only two activities had been implemented in Tanzania since inception of the Project. The first one was a capacity building activity for Members of Parliament serving on Committees and the second for civil society organisations involved in HIV and AIDS work in that country. Needless to say, more could have been done, given the length of time since the beginning of the Project. However, some administrative challenges had caused delays in implementation.

iii) Seychelles and Namibia

Regrettably, no updates were received by the Standing Committee from Seychelles and Namibia on the implementation of the Project.

Being concerned about the status quo, the Standing Committee resolved that each participating Parliament be required to submit a progress report

on the Project to the Standing Committee on HSDSP every three months. The Reports should highlight any implementation challenges and impediments being faced in order to facilitate timely intervention and guidance by the Committee where necessary. This will contribute to smoother implementation of the Project in the National Parliaments.

I wish to further report to this august house, Mr President, that the Committee under the auspices of the SADC PF SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project, and in collaboration with the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus, co-hosted the first ever Women's Parliament on the occasion of the 41st Plenary Assembly Session in Mahé, Seychelles from 5th to 6th July, 2017. This international event focused on Resolution 60/2, championed by the SADC region and passed by the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The deliberations during the Women's Parliament centred around four thematic areas, namely:

- i) Gender Based Violence
- ii) Women Girls and HIV/AIDS
- iii) Access to Abortion Services
- iv) Access to Information and SRHR Services.

The Women's Parliament was aimed at identifying and prioritising what needed to be done going forward in order to achieve the goals contained in the said Resolution 60/2. **A full report on the proceedings during the Women's Parliament will be presented by the RWPC, during this sitting.**

Mr President, the Standing Committee expressed concern over the fact that in most Parliaments, the Members of Parliament serving as delegates to SADC PF do not have information on the Projects being undertaken under this Programme. This is because most of the country delegations do not meet regularly to exchange notes on what activities the respective SADC PF Standing Committees on which they serve were undertaking, hence they have little, if any, knowledge on the activities being undertaken by their counterparts serving on other Standing Committees of the Forum. As a

result, the members are not able to track SADC PF activities such as the SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project, and provide timely interventions where necessary.

In light of the foregoing, the Standing Committee on Human and Social Development and Special Programmes does hereby resolve to recommend to the 41st Plenary Assembly as follows:

- i) The Forum should, yet again, implore all participating Parliaments, through the Offices of Speakers, to take the Project very seriously and ensure that the Project activities are implemented timely in order to ensure that the Forum maintains its good standing with its cooperating partners, but more importantly in order that the intended beneficiaries, the citizens of SADC, can begin to enjoy the benefits of the Project;
- ii) The Forum should appeal to all Speakers of SADC parliaments to institute mechanisms for MPs serving on SADC PF Standing Committees to meet regularly within their countries to share information about the work of the respective Committees on which they serve and the Forum in general. It was noted that regular meetings among SADC PF delegates in all the Member Parliaments would allow for easy flow of information and smooth handovers where these became necessary for various reasons.
- iii) The Forum should appeal to all SADC Member Parliaments to take the resolutions of the **Mahe Declaration, an outcome document from the Women's parliament** seriously and advocate for their implementation within their legislative mandate and within the context of the respective countries.
- iv) The Forum record its gratitude to all the participating Parliaments under the SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project for their cooperation and facilitation of the Project Mid Term Review, which was successfully undertaken.

In concluding, sir, allow me to place on record the gratitude of the Standing Committee to the SADC PF Secretariat for convening and coordinating the meeting and to Sweden and Norway for providing continued funding for the SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project. Tribute also goes to all other partners who, through their support, made it possible for the meeting to be held.

Mr President, I beg to move.